

# HOW DO I BECOME A REHS?

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING REGISTRATION AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

1. **What duties does a Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) perform?** A REHS works to improve the quality of life and health through environmental education, consultation, and enforcement. Although a majority of REHSs work for government, many are also employed by the private sector. Some typical program responsibilities include food protection, land use, recreational swimming, onsite sewage disposal, drinking water, housing, vector control, disaster sanitation, and solid waste and hazardous materials management.

Typical duties of a REHS in local government include inspections of various facilities such as food establishments, public swimming pools, community drinking water systems, landfills, and underground storage tanks in order to determine compliance with federal, state, and local statutes, regulations, and ordinances. For further information contact California Environmental Health Association at [www.ceha.org](http://www.ceha.org), the California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health at [www.ccdeh.com](http://www.ccdeh.com), or the universities with approved environmental health degrees that are listed on our web page.

2. **What are the minimum requirements to become a REHS?** A bachelor's degree is required with a minimum of 30 semester units of approved basic science courses including approved coursework in biology, inorganic chemistry, organic chemistry or physics, microbiology, and college algebra (third year) or precalculus.
3. **What are basic science courses?** Basic science courses are normally the foundation college courses required for a science degree. These should not be confused with general education courses that cannot be counted if they are for non-science majors. Courses designed for liberal arts, general education, or non-science degrees are not acceptable.
4. **Where can I get further information regarding the EHS Registration Program?** You may visit the Department of Health Services web page at [www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ddwem/environmental/REHS/REHS.htm](http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ddwem/environmental/REHS/REHS.htm). In addition contact Margaret Blood, Department of Health Services, Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program, PO Box 997413, MS 7404, Sacramento, California 95899-7413 or telephone (916) 552-9991, [mblood@dhs.ca.gov](mailto:mblood@dhs.ca.gov) or Cynthia Cotton (916) 449-5662, [ccotton@dhs.ca.gov](mailto:ccotton@dhs.ca.gov).
5. **Where can I get a listing of the basic requirements of the program?** On our web page, click on *Education Requirements* under

EDUCATION and TRAINING. This will list the education, training, and experience requirements for the five different options.

6. **Which universities have approved environmental health degrees that meet the requirements of Option V (Section 106635)?**

Universities offering approved programs for a bachelor's degree are California State University, Northridge; California State University, Fresno and California State University, San Bernardino. Universities offering an approved master's degree are the University of California, Los Angeles and Loma Linda University and California State University, Northridge. California State University, Los Angeles and California State University, Fullerton offer environmental health programs in Options III and IV. Please check with our office or your school counselor for the approved program option. For further information see our web page and under EDUCATION and TRAINING select "Universities Offering Approved Environmental Health degrees."

7. **I graduated from a college in a country other than the United States. How can I receive credit for the coursework I have completed?**

All candidates with foreign transcripts must have a credential evaluation service review their official transcripts and submit a letter as a part of the application package. Click on *Foreign Transcripts under APPLICATIONS* on our web page for a list of companies that provide this service.

8. **How do I apply for registration as an Environmental Health Specialist?**

To apply for registration as an EHS or certification as an EHS trainee you will need to file an application with the Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program (REHS Program). Applications are available on the REHS web page. Your application package must include:

- 1) A completed Environmental Health Specialist Registration application and a nonrefundable **\$95.00** application fee.
- 2) An evaluation letter from CPS Human Resource Services, or a foreign credential evaluation service;

Mail your application package to the REHS Program

California Department of Health Services  
Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program  
MS 7404  
P.O. Box 997413,  
Sacramento, CA 95899-7413

**You may apply concurrently CPS Human Resource Services and the REHS Program.**

**FOR Graduates of AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES and COLLEGES**

You will need to file an application with CPS for the evaluation of your transcripts and remit **\$245.25** to:

CPS Human Resource Services  
241 Lathrop Way  
Sacramento, CA 95815

phone (916) 263-3624 ext 3061

CPS encourages candidates who wish clarification that their science courses satisfy the rigorous definition as outlined in the California Health & Safety Code Section 106635, to call Julia Cook at (916) 263-3624 ext. 3061, or email [jcook@cps.ca.gov](mailto:jcook@cps.ca.gov) prior to submitting their transcripts for evaluation. The CPS web site dedicated to transcript evaluation is [www.cps.ca.gov/TakeATest/EnvHealth](http://www.cps.ca.gov/TakeATest/EnvHealth).

**FOR Graduates of FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES and COLLEGES**

9. All candidates with foreign transcripts must have a credential evaluation service review their official transcripts and submit a letter as a part of the application package. Click on *Foreign Transcripts under APPLICATIONS* on our web page for a list of companies that provide this service.
10. **How long does the evaluation process take?** A transcript evaluation letter from CPS will be mailed to you approximately four weeks after the receipt of all required documentation. This letter tells you whether or not you are eligible to become an environmental health specialist trainee and may list additional requirements you need to complete. Generally, the letter from DHS will arrive in the following week.
11. **Where can I complete the training and experience requirements?** Local environmental health agencies that have an approved Environmental Health Specialist Trainee Program can provide the required training and experience. Along with your certification letter stating that are eligible to work as a trainee, you will receive a listing of agencies with approved Training Plans. Typically you will work for a county environmental health agency and meet the requirements as a part of your employment. The specific training plan requirements can be found on the web page under *Elements of a Training Plan*. Be sure to work with your training coordinator.
12. **How do I prepare for the registration examination?** The training and experience requirements are designed to prepare you for the exam. A study guide and a list of reference materials are available, both on our web page under the heading EXAMS or by mail. You also may want to consider taking one of the REHS Exam Preparation courses, visit the link *Exam Review Courses*.
13. **When will I be eligible to take the examination to become a Registered Environmental Health Specialist?** After all of the education, training, and experience requirements have been met, you will be eligible to take the exam that is given three times a year. You will be notified

prior to exam that you are eligible. The exam is scheduled usually in March, July, and November in both Sacramento and the Los Angeles area.

14. **When will I receive the results of the exam?** You will receive a notice in the mail approximately four to six weeks after the exam indicating whether you passed or failed. Percentage scores are not released.
15. **Must I report a change of address?** Yes, send your signed request for change of address to the Department of Health Services at the address listed below. It is your responsibility to notify us of any address change. Failure to keep this office updated on your current address may jeopardize your application status.
16. **What is the Environmental Health Specialist Registration Committee (EHSRC)?** The EHSRC was created in the Environmental Health Specialist Registration Act, Health and Safety Code Section 106675. Committee members advise and make recommendations to the program staff on issues relevant to the registration process. A list of the committee members is provided on the web page.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION YOU MAY CONTACT:**

**California Department of Health Services  
Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program  
MS 7404  
P.O. Box 997413  
Sacramento, California 95899-7413**

**Message Phone: (916) 449-5663**

**Fax: (916) 449-6556**

**Email: [REHSprog@dhs.ca.gov](mailto:REHSprog@dhs.ca.gov)**

**Web Page: [www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ddwem/environmental/REHS/REHS.htm](http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ddwem/environmental/REHS/REHS.htm)**